

Stressing over stress

Written by Administrator

Monday, 14 September 2009 14:37 -

Stress, the bane of modern, urban living. Is it all bad? I WORK from 8am to 9pm every day in my job as an accountant. In the weekends, I sometimes have to take home work as well. I have a family with two kids who are constantly crying for my attention. I feel very, very stressed. Is stress a medical condition?

To this day, there remains no definition of stress that everyone can agree upon. One event that may stress out a person may be completely pleasurable for another person.

For example, driving a car may be a pleasurable experience for a husband. He loves taking out the car for long rides along the coast. He looks forward to driving outstation.

On the other hand, driving may stress out his wife completely. Whenever she is in front of the wheel, she freaks out.

One definition, coined in 1936 by Hans Selye defines stress as the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change. In the *British Medical Journal*, 1951, one doctor concluded that stress in addition to being itself, was also the cause of itself, and the result of itself. (It must be noted that when Selye coined the word, he did not know it was a word already in use in physics, denoting elastic tension in materials!)

Stress is usually viewed negatively because it is perceived to be synonymous with physical, mental or emotional strain or tension.

However, stress can also be good because it helps people accomplish more and beyond their usual boundaries. Good stress is also called eustress.

But how can stress ever be good?

Increased stress actually results in increased productivity in the human and animal body. In a stressful situation, such as that caused by a natural disaster like a tsunami, can actually make people think and work faster and harder to overcome the situation.

Exams are also stressful situations, but when you come out of it, you would have gained much knowledge. Even planning a wedding can be a very stressful situation!

However, there will only be increased productivity up to a certain point, a peak, then things go downhill thereafter as the body and mind go into fatigue, exhaustion and distress. The end result of it can be a physical and nervous breakdown.

Are there different types of stress then?

Yes. Acute stress is the kind that gives you a sudden jolt. For example, if you suddenly were in a car accident in the middle of the highway. When the short-term stressor is removed, your body returns to normal.

Episodic acute stress happens when you lead a chaotic life. For example, if you always are in a rush, or give yourself too much to do. You may be prone to suffering long-term illness as a result of such stress.

Chronic stress occurs when there is unrelenting pressure on yourself for an interminable period of time. Common long-term causes include financial worries (it's difficult to be poor and happy), unemployment, bad family relationships, caring for an ill family member, having a bad job or bad boss, if you are being harassed or bullied constantly, if you set too high standards for yourself.

My mother is a very calm woman who can run a household, organise society fetes and also help run the family business without batting an eyelid. But I'm sure she must be stressed. How does stress manifest?

Again, just as what causes us stress differs from one individual to another, how we manifest stress also differs.

Symptoms to look out for include: frequent headaches, jaw clenching, teeth grinding, stammering, poor sexual desire, insomnia or nightmares, difficulty in concentrating, racing thoughts, tremors, faintness, sweating, frequent blushing, cold hands or feet, dry mouth, forgetfulness, confusion, feeling overloaded or overwhelmed, frequent crying spells, fidgeting, sighing.

Stressing over stress

Written by Administrator

Monday, 14 September 2009 14:37 -

align="justify">Sometimes, stress can also manifest as diseases ♦ having frequent colds, rashes, itching, frequent ♦allergy♦ attacks, heartburn, nausea, neck pain, back pain, muscle spasms, ringing or buzzing noises in your ear, excessive belching or flatulence, constipation or diarrhoea, and panic attacks. ♦ </p><p align="justify">There are also certain behaviour patterns which may not be apparent to yourself but which other people around you can notice: difficulty in making decisions, irritability and frustration, edginess, overreaction to little things, increased number of minor accidents around the house or workplace, not being punctual, inattention to appearance, reduced work efficiency, suspiciousness and defensiveness, increased smoking or drinking alcohol, excessive gambling, impulse buying. ♦ </p><p align="justify">Can stress cause major diseases like heart attacks, strokes and cancer?♦ </p><p align="justify">If stress is persistent, it can exacerbate high blood pressure, which can lead to increased risk of heart attacks and strokes. It can lead or hasten the development of gastritis, stomach and intestinal ulcers. It is known to lead to flares of irritable bowel syndrome, eczema and psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis and asthma. ♦ </p><p align="justify">It can also be the cause of fluctuant and irregular menstrual cycles in women, impotence and premature ejaculation in men. ♦ </p><p align="justify">It can also cause immune system disturbances, leading to susceptibility of your body to infections, herpes, and certain cancers.♦ </p><div align="justify">Dr YLM graduated as a medical doctor, and has been writing for many years on various subjects such as medicine, health advice, computers and entertainment. The information contained in this column is for general educational purposes only. Neither The Star nor the author gives any warranty on accuracy, completeness, functionality, usefulness or other assurances as to such information. The Star and the author disclaim all responsibility for any losses, damage to property or personal injury suffered directly or indirectly from reliance on such information.♦ </div><p align="justify"> </p>By DR Y.L.M.Source : The Star (7 October 2007)
<p> </p>